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Jean-François Bédard

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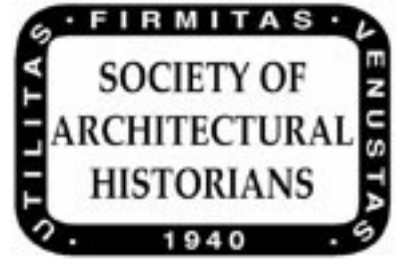
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Review: Jules Hardouin-Mansart; Jules Hardouin-Mansart, 1646–1708; Bâtir pour le roi: Jules Hardouin-Mansart (1646–1708)

Jules Hardouin-Mansart Jules Hardouin-Mansart, 1646–1708 Bâtir pour le roi: Jules Hardouin-Mansart (1646–1708) by Bertrand Testaz; Alexandre Gady; Alexandre Gady

Review by: Jean-François Bédard

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Towers are the subject of chapter three. *Mingqi* towers are almost always multistory, but tend to be narrower than the buildings classified as multistory. The author proposes eleven subgroups of towers based on Chinese terminology and structural features. She draws vocabulary for naming the types from *Yingzao fashi*. Guo never cites that text, mentioning only that the Chinese terms are defined in it. These terms also have usages in modern Mandarin, and it is regrettable that Guo moves between classical and modern meanings without differentiation. The towers, especially those with birds on their roofs, beg for explication, and Guo offers several explanations. She writes, for example, that they “are part of the realm of fantasy and act as part of a highly ritualistic performance” (81). She also writes that the pottery tower is the earliest representation of . . . pagoda-like architecture (81). The point is puzzling, since Guo told the reader earlier that a different type of multistoried *mingqi* was the structural source of pagodas.

The book continues with a discussion of granaries and other storehouses. The reader is told that the Chinese names of these building types can be traced to classical sources, *Shi Jing* (Book of Odes) and *Li Ji* (Book of Rites). Both, surviving in versions from the first millennium BCE, contain many chapters and hundreds of pages, but nothing beyond their titles is provided in the notes. *Mingqi* often have been used in tandem with the excavated remains of storage buildings to propose theoretical reconstructions, and, as Guo demonstrates, the storehouse *mingqi* also share features with existing wooden buildings in China and Japan. The author chooses convincing examples to show that many subtypes of storage architecture are found among *mingqi*.

The following chapter similarly discusses pottery structures that are used convincingly to postulate the appearance of actual stoves and wells. Based on *mingqi*, Guo concludes there were two kinds of stoves in Han China, and what she deduces about wells increases our understanding of Han engineering, kitchens, and pavilions. The last chapter devoted to architectural *mingqi* deals with pigsties and privies. Again the pottery miniatures seem to provide images of some of the physical features of daily life in Han China.

Chapter seven shows that hip, gable, and pyramidal roofs—three of the four main roof types of later Chinese architecture—are found in these Han miniature objects. The fourth type, the gable-on-hip roof, Guo argues, is anticipated, but because it was technically beyond the ability of Han builders, is not found in *mingqi*. An interesting section of the chapter deals with roof ornaments. Flowers and leaves, she believes, anticipate similar roof ornaments in the Song dynasty (960–1279) and later. The author then returns to birds, suggesting that they are among the types of ornaments that anticipate *chiwei* (literally, owls’ tails), the curved decorations at either end of the roof ridge that become common in Chinese architecture beginning in the Tang dynasty (618–907), and that their meanings range from signs of prosperity to associations with the sun. The author does not promote one idea above others. The last chapter before the conclusion deals with how pottery *mingqi* were made, including materials, molds, tools, and modular components. Guo observes that while regional features are present in some *mingqi*, certain features, such as complex bracket sets, are found in *mingqi* produced across China.

In her last chapter Guo does not offer a conclusion in the traditional sense. Instead, she turns to gate-shaped bricks in the Musée Cernuschi and British Museum that she dates to the middle of the Western Han period (ca. 100 BCE) and that she proposes must have come from a Han tomb. Her chronology is that of Wang Zhongshu and her discussion of tombs similar to that of Jean James, two authors not cited in this book.³ The reader expects a conclusion that strongly reasserts the proposition that *mingqi* that take the form of buildings inform us about actual architecture. That is not done, and in the end, Guo has convinced the reader only that specific details of pottery buildings—particularly bracket sets, eave end tiles, roof forms, and quotidian items such as privies—were modeled with real structures in mind.

The strength of *The Mingqi Pottery Buildings of Han Dynasty China* is that it brings the attention of English readers to an aspect of Han architecture through more than 200 examples and invites them to evaluate the reliability of this architec-

ture in miniature as evidence of the appearance of full-size buildings. The incomplete notes and omission of so much of the relevant scholarly literature make the book less useful as a research tool.

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Notes

1. Wu Hung is not directly credited for this translation, which is published in “The Art and Architecture of the Warring States Period,” in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China, from the Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.*, ed. Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), esp. 727–32. Guo does cite Lothar van Falkenhäusen, “The Waning of the Bronze Age: Material Culture and Social developments, 770–481,” 450–544, in the same book. Guo does cite Wu Hung, “‘Mingqi’ de lilun he shijian” (Theory and practice of *mingqi*), *Wenwu* no. 6 (2006), 72–81.
2. The formal similarities between storied *mingqi* and four-sided brick pagodas have been recognized by many, including Liang Sicheng, Liu Dunzhen, William Willets, and Dietrich Seckel. I choose these four because their books have had long shelf lives and many printings. None is listed in Guo’s bibliography. Han sources of pagodas are discussed in Liang Sicheng, *A Pictorial History of Chinese Architecture*, ed. Wilma Fairbank (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984), 63; Liu Dunzhen, *Zhongguo gudai jianzhu shi* (History of premodern Chinese architecture) (Beijing: China Building Industry Press, 1980), 83–86; Dietrich Seckel, *The Art of Buddhism* (New York: Greystone Press, 1968), 122–25; William Willets, *Foundations of Chinese Art from Neolithic Pottery to Modern Architecture* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), 392–97.
3. The seminal work is Wang Zhongshu, *Handai kaoguxue gaishuo: Handai de muzang* (General discussion of Han archaeology: Han tombs) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984). In English, the comprehensive work is Jean M. James, *A Guide to the Tomb and Shrine Art of the Han Dynasty 206 B.C.–A.D. 220* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1996). Most regrettable is the lack of recognition of Nicole de Bissop, *La Chinesse sous toit* (Brussels: Musées d’Art et d’Histoire, 2007), whose subject is Han architectural *mingqi*.

Bertrand Jestaz

Jules Hardouin-Mansart

Paris: Editions A. et J. Picard, 2008, 2 vols., 399, 255 pp., 54 color and 328 b/w illus. €79, ISBN 9782708408173

Alexandre Gady, editor

Jules Hardouin-Mansart, 1646–1708

Paris: Editions de la Maison des sciences de l’homme, 2010, 612 pp., 400 color and 94 b/w illus. €96, ISBN 9782735111879

Alexandre Gady

Bâtir pour le roi: Jules Hardouin-Mansart (1646–1708)

Paris: Musée Carnavalet–Histoire de Paris, 2009, 33 pp., some color illus., plans. €2, ISBN 978275961042

Jules Hardouin-Mansart (1646–1708) was the son of an obscure painter, Raphaël Hardouin. As a youth, he first trained with his great uncle, the famous François Mansart, whose prestigious family name he added to his own after the elder architect died in 1666. In 1673 he became involved with the Bâtiments du roi (the king's works), when its superintendent, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, selected him for an inspection mission to the Languedoc. Hardouin-Mansart's career was launched, and it progressed rapidly thereafter. A member of the Royal Academy of Architecture in 1675, he became First Architect of the King in 1681 and, unexpectedly for a building professional, Surintendant des Bâtiments in 1699. Only once before had this prestigious position, traditionally earmarked for the nobility, been held by an architect, Philibert Delorme.

As superintendent and first architect, Hardouin-Mansart took on simultaneously the roles of client and architect—a convenient, if ethically problematic, convergence. This concentration of power helped him reorganize the Bâtiments. Prefiguring the modern architectural office, he set up a hierarchical structure from the apex of which he oversaw numerous draftsmen and building managers. This efficient configuration enabled him to satisfy both Louis XIV's voracious appetite for building and the copious demands placed on the Bâtiments, which included not only public buildings in the provinces but also private requests from members of the court. As his career advanced, Hardouin-Mansart also rose through the ranks of society: he was ennobled in 1682; the king bestowed on him the title of Chevalier de l'Ordre de Saint-Michel in 1693; and in 1699 he took his place among the landed gentry as the Comte de Sagonne.

To an extent, Hardouin-Mansart's professional and social success had a negative effect on the critical reception of his work. The Duc de Saint-Simon, ever on guard

to preserve the privileges of the old aristocracy, disparaged Hardouin-Mansart's meteoric rise from modest beginnings, insinuating that the architect was more adept at flattery than building. Some architectural historians have concurred with the duke's assertions. Espousing the Vasarian myth of the solitary genius and disregarding the collaborative, sometimes convoluted, building process, they have sought to identify the “real” designers at the Bâtiments by analyzing drawing styles. Fiske Kimball, for instance, believed that Pierre Lepautre, one of Hardouin-Mansart's draftsmen and engravers, was responsible for the innovations in interior decoration that took place during the last years of Louis XIV's reign.¹ Going further in the pinpointing of authorship, Albert Laprade denied Hardouin-Mansart any design ability whatsoever. He credited Louis Le Vau's disciple François d'Orbay with the bulk of Hardouin-Mansart's buildings that were realized before d'Orbay's death.²

Historians wishing to look at the first architect's legacy more dispassionately, or at least those aware of the complexities of architectural design, had to contend with another consequence of his prominence: the immense quantity of documents generated under his supervision. They have grappled with not only the profusion of drawings produced at the Bâtiments but also the superabundance of notarial records, contracts, reports, and letters documenting Hardouin-Mansart's role as first architect, controller of the royal building budget, protector of the royal art academies, and supervisor of the royal manufactories. This archival bounty makes any overall assessment of his contribution a daunting proposition. Until now, published scholarship has not lived up to Hardouin-Mansart's stature in the history of French architecture.³

Several initiatives spurred by the tercentenary of his death in 2008 have helped to remedy this situation. An aborted exhibition planned for Versailles that year, subsequently transformed into a smaller showing at the Musée Carnavalet in 2009, led to an international conference in Paris and Versailles in December 2008 and two imposing publications: Bertrand Jestaz's

two-volume study (2008), and a 600-page collective work edited by Alexandre Gady (2010).⁴ The nearly simultaneous publication of two major studies on the same architect is apparently due to scholarly intrigue worthy of the court at Versailles.

Despite their different formats, the two books share a common goal: the rehabilitation of Hardouin-Mansart as a designer. Changes in architectural scholarship, and certainly in architectural publishing, during the past fifty years account for their dissimilarities. Jestaz's *Jules Hardouin-Mansart*, a greatly expanded and revised version of his groundbreaking but unpublished 1962 dissertation at the École des Chartes, Paris, falls within the lineage of studies of an artists' lives and works, based on painstaking archival research.⁵ The straightforward narrative—a chronological string of the major milestones in Hardouin-Mansart's life in parallel with his architectural works—is in keeping with the author's exacting training. The account is divided into two parts—before and after 1681, the year when Hardouin-Mansart became Louis XIV's first architect. Following the order of Jestaz's dissertation, the chapters are set out according to the ascendancy of the architect's successive patrons. In his conclusion, Jestaz appraises Hardouin-Mansart's artistic legacy. Based on masterful analyses that are backed by consummate knowledge of seventeenth-century architecture, Jestaz shows Hardouin-Mansart to be a great innovator. Whereas historians have customarily portrayed the architects of the Bâtiments as uninspired, formulaic designers, Jestaz's Hardouin-Mansart emerges as a talented individual who favored unconventional forms and drew upon unusual precedents. Jestaz interprets the architect's love of plain surfaces and simple masses, his interest in horizontal compositions, and his restrained or unusual treatment of the orders as challenges to tradition. Thus, ironically, the architect most closely associated with the so-called classicism of the *grand siècle* may have been the least committed to the ideal of a normative doctrine promoted by the Royal Academy of Architecture.

Jestaz supports his discussion with a wealth of documentary evidence. In fact,

the entire second volume is devoted to extensive transcriptions of the most important primary sources, in large part archival and unpublished. These include the “Bref estat,” a manuscript life of Hardouin-Mansart (perhaps written by his brother-in-law Robert de Cotte, as Jestaz suggests), whose importance was first revealed in Jestaz’s dissertation.⁶ A similar documentary interest guided Jestaz in his choice of illustrations. Most often photographed by the author himself, these images are never mere illustrations to the text but provide graphic evidence, which he deciphers as adroitly as he dissects archival records. At times, the black-and-white reproductions lack the necessary sharpness, and the decision to enlarge Jestaz’s photographs for the volumes’ covers—surprising from a publisher as experienced as Picard—seems misguided. But these are quibbles in comparison with the immense benefit of making these important documents accessible.

Gady’s elegantly designed *Jules Hardouin-Mansart, 1646–1708* belongs to the contemporary genre of lavishly illustrated multiauthored works that explore the career of a single artist from various perspectives. Although it is not, properly speaking, an exhibition catalog, the book illustrates many of the artifacts displayed at the Carnavalet and addresses themes broached in that show, for which Gady was guest curator and the author of a thirty-three-page illustrated guide. Seasoned specialists (though Jestaz is absent, as one might expect) and younger scholars alike, most of them participants in the 2008 conference, wrote the introductory essays, which range from biographical accounts to thematic studies. Others contributed to the illustrated catalogue of the architect’s projects and buildings that forms the second part of the book.

Since both of these undertakings set out to cover the entirety of Hardouin-Mansart’s life and career, some overlapping and even duplication inevitably occurs. Many drawings published by Jestaz in 2008 are also reproduced in Gady’s 2010 volume, this time in color, and Gady includes a transcription of the “Bref estat” as well. However, the book edited by Gady is hardly a glossy and derivative account of

Hardouin-Mansart’s career. While of necessity drawing on Jestaz, it occasionally questions, sometimes corrects, and frequently expands on that scholar’s discoveries and interpretations. The stimulating dialogue between the two publications establishes a fertile context for future studies of Hardouin-Mansart.

Some of the introductory essays of the 2010 publication concern material that Jestaz had interspersed among his architectural analyses. Claude Mignot describes Hardouin-Mansart’s early training, notably his relationship to François Mansart, up to the time when the younger architect became a member of the Academy. Benjamin Ringot and Thierry Sarmant discuss the remainder of Hardouin-Mansart’s career. In two other essays, these three authors analyze the structure of the Bâtiments during the two key phases of the architect’s career. In his principal contribution to the catalog, Gady addresses Hardouin-Mansart’s design work. Examining the architect’s articulation of wall surfaces, use of the orders, preferences in roof types, and taste for curved volumes, he corroborates Jestaz’s appreciation of Hardouin-Mansart’s skill. For Gady and Jestaz alike, Hardouin-Mansart’s quest for simplicity emerges as his most important contribution to French architecture.

Other essays focus on less-known aspects of Hardouin-Mansart’s career. Gady expands on Jestaz’s brief remarks on portraits of Hardouin-Mansart, a topic he featured in the introductory gallery at the Carnavalet. Combing through archival records, particularly Hardouin-Mansart’s probate inventory, Joëlle Barreau and Yoann Brault trace the provenance of his immense fortune. Guillaume Fonkenell addresses Hardouin-Mansart’s technical proficiency, in particular his mastery of stereotomy. Finally, Claude Mignot restores Hardouin-Mansart’s crucial role in the development of the French formal garden.

The second part of the book, a catalogue raisonné of Hardouin-Mansart’s buildings, adopts a dual structure, typological and chronological. Documentary discoveries lead to the addition of new constructions to Jestaz’s list. These include the main altar of Saint-Just Cathedral in

Narbonne (1694–95), the Orangery of the Chateau of Thouars (1699–1705), and the only building Hardouin-Mansart seems to have erected outside France, the Chateau of L’Isle, in Switzerland (1694–98). In other cases, attributions are rejected. Fonkenell questions Jestaz’s ascribing of a project for Place Bellecour in Lyons to Hardouin-Mansart, arguing that the only document related to this design probably dates from the late eighteenth century and was subsequently falsified in order to make it pass for an autograph by the architect.⁷ With an oeuvre as abundant as Hardouin-Mansart’s, researchers will surely be revisiting and refining this inventory in the future.

The institutional sponsors of both of these publications deserve recognition: the French Ministry of Culture and Communication for Jestaz; the Centre André-Chastel of the Université Paris IV–Sorbonne and the Centre allemand d’histoire de l’art for Gady. It is encouraging to see public institutions fund these costly but crucial scholarly undertakings. They are undoubtedly the finest tribute that can be paid to Hardouin-Mansart’s exceptional career.

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Notes

1. Kimball developed this thesis in several articles. It is summarized in Fiske Kimball, *The Creation of the Rococo* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1943).
2. Albert Laprade, *François d’Orbay, architecte de Louis XIV* (Paris: Editions Vincent Fréal et Cie, 1960).
3. The two most significant syntheses on Hardouin-Mansart up to now have been the chapters devoted to the architect in Louis Hauteceœur, *Histoire de l’architecture classique en France*, vol. 2: *Le règne de Louis XIV* (Paris: Éditions A. et J. Picard et Cie, 1948), 527–688, and Pierre Bourget and Georges Cattai, *Jules Hardouin Mansart* (Paris: Editions Vincent, Fréal & Cie, 1960).
4. Jules Hardouin-Mansart international conference, Paris and Versailles, 11–13 Dec. 2008; proceedings to be published in 2011 and “Bâtir pour le roi: Jules Hardouin-Mansart (1646–1708),” an exhibition at the Musée Carnavalet, Paris, 3 April–28 June 2009.
5. Bertrand Jestaz, “Jules Hardouin-Mansart, œuvre personnelle, méthodes de travail et collaborateurs” (diss. Ecole des Chartes, 1962), 2 vols., copy at the Archives Nationales in Paris, AB XXVIII 329.

6. The “Bref estat” (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Mss., nouv. acq. fr. 22 936, fol. 130–135) was first published by Allan Braham and Peter Smith in *François Mansart*, 2 vols. (London: A. Zwemmer Ltd, 1973), 163–66.

7. Alexandre Gady, ed., *Jules Hardouin-Mansart, 1646–1708* (Paris: Editions de la Maison des sciences de l’homme, 2010), 565. Fonkenell announces a more complete demonstration in his contribution to the conference proceedings to be published in 2011.

Miguel Morán Turina

**La memoria de las piedras.
Anticuarios, arqueólogos y
coleccionistas de antigüedades en la
España de los Austrias**

Madrid: Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica, 2010, 451 pp., 80 color and 96 b/w illus. €40, ISBN 9788493606077

The story Miguel Morán Turina tells is one seldom told. It is an obscure tale, one could even argue. In a word, antiquarian. Why, then, painstakingly trace the story of these early modern Spanish lovers of Roman antiquity, of their quixotic struggle against the inexorable forces of time to salvage, whether textually or graphically, the “memory of stones,” as the title of the book poetically evokes? It is not the least of *La memoria de las piedras*’ merits that it demonstrates the presence and relevance of the Roman past in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain, most notably among its cultural and political elite. Superbly edited by the Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica (CEEH), which has been promoting the study of the Habsburg monarchy and early modern Spanish visual culture for close to a decade now, and lavishly illustrated with judicious selections from a vast array of little-known manuscript and printed sources, this book fills a long-standing gap in a field dominated by historians of art and architecture, who have traditionally been interested in and fascinated by the royal or private collecting of chiefly Italian paintings and the reception of Italian art forms.

La memoria de las piedras starts off with two introductory chapters, the first on the interest in and appreciation for Roman ruins in medieval Spain, and the second

focusing on Spanish travelers to the Eternal City as well as perceptions and descriptions of Rome in Spanish Renaissance writing. This initial section is followed by some fascinating pages on the development among Spanish erudites of a more systematic and rigorous method of studying Roman coins, transcribing Latin inscriptions, surveying the landscape for ancient monuments, and identifying archaeological sites. Conversely, in the following chapter, Morán notes the lack of interest and respect among the common people and a number of civic or religious authorities for those remnants of the pagan world, which they either reused as construction material, destroyed for religious motives, or simply ignored, causing them to decay and disappear. And they vanished at an alarming rate, as attested by various sixteenth- and seventeenth-century descriptions of the celebrated site of Itálica, outside of Seville. In his view, there was no serious engagement with Roman ruins at the time, no sense of their value as archaeological and architectural patrimony, and no real commitment to their protection and preservation on the part of Spanish institutions; in a nutshell, there was no modern notion of moral duty or legal responsibility.

The function of antiquities was perceived to be merely utilitarian or practical, as in the case of the well-known aqueduct of Segovia. Regrettably, Morán only briefly touches upon the much more historically grounded use and (re)appropriation of ancient statues, columns, arches, or inscriptions by several Andalusian municipalities in order to foster civic pride among their population. By doing so, he downplays the importance, significance, and symbolic value—in terms of self-perception and collective identity—of these artifacts’ strategic incorporation in existing buildings, such as the city hall of that most famous of all Roman cities in the Iberian Peninsula, Mérida, or new public spaces like the Alameda of Hercules in Seville.

This hunt for antiquities and the conservation and collection of antiquities by individual scholars, nobles, and city officials throughout the Iberian peninsula starting in the mid-sixteenth century, con-

nects these objects to Spain’s larger re-reading and re-writing of its past. It speaks to and intersects with its renewed sense of (mostly local and regional, not yet national) identity, as well as to Spain’s rediscovery, recovery, and new-found appreciation for its Roman—and, to a lesser extent, pre-Roman—heritage after centuries of Muslim rule. This was a lengthy process, in great part supported by the Spanish monarchy, which, starting with Philip II, sought to base its authority and legitimacy on both classical and Christian traditions, as the magnitude and complexity of the Escorial (with its architecture, its decoration, its library, and its relic collection) clearly attest.

In light of this, the author’s examination of the Habsburg kings’ relationship to classical antiquity and its place within the royal art collections can appear somewhat perplexing. It seems rather restrictive and narrow, and perhaps overly simplistic, for instance, to measure Philip II’s interest in antiquities (or lack thereof) only by his distaste for classical sculpture, and to compare it with his ill-fated heir don Carlos’ fairly substantial collection of antique statues, which he managed to build up in a very short period of time. Clearly, Spanish rulers understood the propagandistic value of antiquity and appreciated the reputation, respectability, and credibility it could afford them. And this was not limited to stones or statues. It could also be found in the visual rhetoric of monuments, pageantry and ceremonial, as well as in the discourse of print, poetry, and painting. Morán closes his book with a short chapter about Philip IV’s copies of famous antique statues that the great painter Diego Velázquez had commissioned on his behalf during his time in Rome in 1649–50, forming what the author labels the king’s “imaginary museum.” Once again, despite the obvious striving for prestige and distinction underlying such an undertaking, which are evoked but never seriously explored, Morán doubts the genuineness of the monarch’s interest in antiquities (read statuary) and questions his motives.

Morán is at his very best when he discusses the active participation of Spanish scholars in the learned circles of sixteenth-century Rome, especially in debates about